

THE MEDIA AND THE NAVY FAMILY

Naval personnel and their families may be contacted by news media. You are out in the community and are easy media “targets.” The following might be helpful:

- The Navy-Marine Corps Public Affairs policy is to restrict the release of information concerning members, and families of members, assigned to ships/units that are sensitive or deployed to sensitive areas.
- The release of names or home addresses of members can constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy and also may indicate a service member’s absence from home.
- If service members or their families are contacted by a news organization, they have a right to say “NO.”
- If family members decide (it is THEIR decision) to talk to a news person, they should be careful of what they say.
- Internal PRIVILEGED command information for personal, family planning is NOT for public discussion or news media release.

Area Public Affairs Offices

CNRMA 322-2853
 AIRLANT 444-3373
 SUBLANT 836-1650
 SURFLANT 836-3140

HELPFUL HINTS

- All media people are NOT alike. Some are simply trying to get you to say something, which you might regret later.
- Know with whom you are speaking. Before answering questions, write down the reporter’s name, telephone number, and the name of his or her news organization. Do this even if you’re going to decline comment. It will discourage him or her from persisting after you say no.
- If you do choose to speak, remember it is your right to stop at any time.
- Know who will hear you. Even family members might have information useful to opposing forces. Thanks to technology, the enemy can have access to what you say the moment you say it.
- If you have been misquoted or misrepresented by the press, it is best to do nothing about it unless it is a serious matter, in which case, contact the appropriate Public Affairs Office (PAO).
- On the other hand, when you are enthusiastic about your spouse’s mission, your response can build morale and show American resolve.
- Don’t speculate. It is best not to talk about anything of which you do not have first-hand knowledge. There is nothing wrong with saying, “I don’t know,” in response to questions to which you have no answer.
- If your spouse calls home with information about how the mission is going or homecoming dates, keep it to yourself. Some of what your spouse tells you could be sensitive, wrong, or subject to change.
- Understand that it is not harassment when the media calls you at home or stops you at the supermarket to ask for an interview. Only when they persist, after having been told “NO,” does it become harassment.
- Should you become inundated with press/crank calls because your spouse’s name appears in the media, it would be advisable to have an answering machine.
- The telephone company will trace crank calls if they persist. An unlisted number would be another option.
- Some families decide to stay with friends or family, away from home, for a few days.
- **Rule of thumb:** When in doubt, give a call to the appropriate PAO for advice on how to proceed.

Information adapted from COMNAVAIRLANT Public Affairs Office and the Army Public Affairs Proponent Activity

WEBSITE: www.ffscnorva.navy.mil



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CPD01060